

## Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00

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FM USDEL SALT TWO II

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1902

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EXDIS SALT

DOD HANDLE AS SPECAT FOR SECDEF

E. O. 11652 XGDSI

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH SEMENOV MARCH 30

1. I OPENED THE SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT, SWEEPING ASIDE ALL THE VERBAGE AND DEBATE BETWEEN US, SEMENOV SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR ON ONE FUNDAMENTAL POINT AND THAT WAS THAT IN ANY PERMANENT AGREEMENT THE UNITED STATES HAD TO HAVE NOT ONLY THE SUBSTANCE BUT ALSO THE APPEARANCE OF EQUALITY IN CENTRAL SYSTEMS. WHILE, FOR REASONS HE KNEW, WE WOULD TOLERATE UNEQUAL NUMBERS IN THE INTERIM AGREEMENT FOR A TEMPORARY PERIOD, THIS WAS NOT TOLERABLE FOR US IN A PERMANENT AGREEMENT. THIS WAS THE REASON I WAS PLACING SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON SEEKING THEIR AGREEMENT TO PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL NUMBERS-- ONCE THIS PRINCIPLE WAS ACCEPTED WE COULD THEN DISCUSS DETAILS ON HOW IT COULD BE APPLIED AND THE OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.

2. I THEN SAID THAT WITH RESPECT TO NON- CENTRAL SYSTEMS I HOPED HE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE WERE NOT REJECTING ALL DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER; HOWEVER IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT MIX THEM UP WITH THE CENTRAL SYSTEMS. " IF SOME UNDERSTANDING CAN BE REACHED ON CENTRAL SYSTEMS-- NOT NECESSARILY A FINAL ONE-- THEN WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT NON- CENTRAL SYSTEMS."

3. I THEN ASKED HIM WHETHER I SHOULD INTERPRET HIS STATEMENT  
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THIS MORNING, WHICH WHILE REJECTING OUR POSITION ON THROW- WEIGHT MADE NO MENTION OF AGGREGATE OR ICBM NUMBERS, AS MEANING THAT HE WAS NOT REJECTING THE CONCEPT OF AN EQUAL AGGREGATE AND AN EQUAL ICBM NUMBER. HE DID NOT DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION EVER GIVE ANY REPLY TO THIS QUESTION.

4. IN HIS REMARKS, SOME OF WHICH WERE FROM PREPARED NOTES, HE SAID THAT HE WAS UNDER IMPRESSION THAT I HAD SOME ALTERNATIVE VERSION TO THE POSITION THAT I HAD THUS FAR TAKEN ON AGGREGATES THAT WOULD, IF I WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH HIM, HELP MOVE THINGS AHEAD. IN VARIOUS WAYS HE URGED THAT I BE MORE CONCRETE IN WHAT I HAVE THUS FAR PRESENTED AND ALSO URGED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TIME FACTOR. IF I HAVE ANY SUCH ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL I " SHOULD NOT ARTIFICIALLY APPLY BRAKES" TO OUR GETTING AHEAD. HE SAID THAT IF THEY KNEW MORE ABOUT THE US POSITION THIS WOULD FACILITATE NEGOTIATION ON " ALL ISSUES."

5. I SUMMED UP MY DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE SOVIET APPROACH WAS MADE UP OF BITS AND PIECES WITHOUT HAVING ANY CLEAR CONCEPT OF THE FINAL AND ULTIMATE GOAL ( I NOTED AT ONE POINT THAT THEY WERE PLAYING PRIMARILY WITH AMERICAN PIECES RATHER THAN THEIR OWN.), WHILE OUR APPROACH WAS BASED UPON TRYING FIRST TO ACHIEVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVE AND THEN TRYING TO FIT THE PIECES INTO THAT PATTERN. IN CLOSING I SAID WITH ALL THEIR TALK OF " ESSENTIAL EQUALITY" AND " EQUAL" IT SEEMED TO ME IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO CONTINUE TO REJECT OUR POSITION WHICH WAS BASED IN FACT ON " EQUALITY" OF THE TWO FORCES. HIS RESPONSE WAS, IN EFFECT, THAT NUMBERS ALONE DO NOT GIVE THE TRUE PICTURE AND TOLD A SLIGHTLY SPICY RUSSIAN STORY TO THE EFFECT THAT FIGURES DON' T LIE, BUT LIARS CAN FIGURE. JOHNSON

SECRET

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* EXDIS

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

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